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December 21, 1962

GM - Mr. Ralph Roberts

We have considered carefully your request for copies of the Cuba telegrams for the key weekend of October 20-21 to attach to your study of communications difficulties during that period. I must say in all honesty that we have serious doubts about including all these telegrams. These doubts run along the following three lines:

1. It is my understanding that your study is an effort to determine what caused the delay in the receipt by field posts of key communications during this period. I believe Mr. Kirkham has seen all of the messages in question and has gathered from them detailed information on the number of pages, number of code groups, number of addressees, and a detailed time schedule for the handling of each message both in Washington and at the field posts. I cannot truly see why copies of the messages themselves would be required since the information necessary for your study has already been obtained from them.
2. I believe the history of the communications delay during the weekend in question is, in fact, the history of Circular 703 and certain messages relating specifically to that circular. Therefore, while I can see some justification for inclusion of Circular 703 and those messages which pertain specifically to the delay in its receipt, I do not believe the purpose of the study justifies inclusion of the 51 telegrams you have requested.
3. Each of the information contained in these messages is, of course, now in the public domain. The telegrams themselves, however, are still highly classified and contain such sensitive detail which has not been made public. As you know, the President has directed us to limit severely the distribution of sensitive telegrams on this and other subjects on a strict need-to-know basis. We would find it difficult, if we were questioned, to justify additional exposure of the substance of these 51 sensitive messages through circulation of your study among Department officials who have not heretofore received copies of the messages.

If, however, after you have considered all the above factors, you still believe that copies of these 51 telegrams are required to make your study effective, we would be glad to reconsider these views.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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Howard Furnas
Deputy Executive Secretary

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